

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I was absent from the Chamber for rollcall vote 320 on May 14, 2008. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

IN RECOGNITION OF BARBARA GOODWIN

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today along with my colleague from California, Congressman DENNIS CARDOZA to pay tribute to the distinguished public service of Barbara Goodwin. After working nearly 40 years with the County of Fresno, she has decided to retire this year.

During her tenure, Barbara worked tirelessly to improve Central California's transportation system. At retirement, she held the position of Executive Director of the Fresno County Council of Governments. We have had the pleasure of working with Barbara frequently and her dedication to the community is to be commended.

Due to her vast knowledge and attention to detail, Barbara was frequently called upon by State agencies to represent the Valley on transportation issues at forums and meetings. Over her distinguished career, Barbara has served on multiple statewide committees such as the University of California's advisory panel on transportation planning curriculum, and the task force on State transportation improvement program reform. In 2007 she was appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley.

Throughout her career with Fresno County, Barbara Goodwin has proven to be a highly effective leader who was always committed to excellent in public service. As she gets ready to spend much more time enjoying other relaxing activities, my colleague and I wish her continued success and best of luck for the future.

HONORING TIAA-CREF'S 90TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of TIAA-CREF's 90th anniversary and to recognize the important contributions that this company has made to New York and across the country.

TIAA-CREF is a company with a rich and distinguished history. As a trustee of Cornell University in my home State of New York, philanthropist and businessman Andrew Carnegie was appalled by how many college professors could not afford to retire. He then established

the Carnegie Foundation to support pension plans for professors. Soon, he realized the Foundation's endowment was too limited for the increasing number of qualified professors and, in 1918, established the Teachers Insurance Annuity Association with an initial million-dollar subsidy from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. At the time, TIAA was the only large, portable, fully-funded private pension system in the country.

In 1952, TIAA created CREF, the College Retirement Equities Fund, the world's first equity variable annuity and today the largest equity mutual fund. That year, an editor of Fortune magazine wrote, "This is the biggest development in the insurance-investment business since the passage of the Social Security Act."

Now, TIAA-CREF is a Fortune 100 company serving 3.4 million active and retired employees of more than 15,000 institutions. TIAA-CREF is also one of the largest employers in the United States, employing almost 1,200 individuals in New York and over 7,000 Americans nationwide.

Headquartered in New York City, TIAA-CREF provides financial services for over 10,400 participants with assets totaling over \$1.3 billion in my home district and administers plans for 1,784 nonprofit educational, research, and health care institutions across New York State.

The important work that this company does in helping Americans plan for retirement and to save for a quality education is unparalleled. I am proud to be honoring them today and wish TIAA-CREF continued success.

HONORING THE 18TH ANNUAL DC BLACK PRIDE CELEBRATION

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, Memorial Day Week, May 21–26, is the 18TH Annual DC Black Pride celebration in Washington, DC.

DC Black Pride is an exciting six-day event complete with dynamic workshops, receptions, cultural arts activities, small and large nightclub events, that culminates in the world's oldest, most inclusive Black Pride Festival. Many consider DC's festival one of the world's pre-eminent Black Pride celebrations. The Festival consistently draws more than 30,000 people to the Nation's Capital. Attendees come from every major urban area in the United States as well as Canada, the Caribbean, South Africa, Great Britain, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. The Black Pride Festival features activities for the entire family, including performances by national recording artists, 200 exhibition booths, book signings from noted writers, participation from national and local health organizations, and arts and crafts.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Day, Inc. (BLGPD), the celebration's organizing body, chose the theme "Official 18: Empowered and Poppin'" to encourage the Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities to vote, to combat homophobia, to promote health and wellness, to strengthen their communities, and to inspire Black LGBT people everywhere to live their lives with pride.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Day, Inc., a non-profit organization with a volunteer Board of Directors, coordinates this annual event. BLGPD's 2008 Board of Directors consists of: Courtney R. Snowden, President; Ray T. Daniels, Jr., Vice President; Christopher Lane, Corresponding Secretary; Khalid Parker, Recording Secretary; Meagan Marciano, Treasurer; and the following Members at Large: Lisa Washington, Sterling A. Washington, and Shanika Whitehurst; and these Members Emeritus: Earl Fowlkes, James W. Hawkins, Eric E. Richardson, Clarence J. Fluker, and Cheryl Dunn, who lead BLGPD in its mission to build knowledge of and to create greater pride in the Black LGBT community's diversity, while raising funds to ameliorate and prevent health problems in this community, especially HIV/AIDS.

I ask this House to join me in welcoming all attending the 18th Annual DC Black Pride celebration in Washington, DC, and I take this opportunity to remind the celebrants that United States citizens who reside in Washington, DC are taxed without full voting representation in Congress.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2419, FOOD CONSERVATION AND ENERGY ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Conference Report of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. I'd like to thank the conferees who worked diligently, day and night for weeks, to craft this bipartisan agreement.

This bill provides an adequate safety net for our farmers and guarantees an affordable and nutritious food supply for the youngest and most vulnerable among us, all in a fiscally responsible way. This bill also helps producers of all commodities stay on the land they hold and love so they may continue with their livelihood, and encourages conservation of natural resources and land for use by future generations.

The bill before us today addresses many of the needs of those in southwest Georgia and Georgia's Second Congressional District, which I represent. The peanut rotation program in the conference agreement, which we paved the way for in the House bill last summer, will bring peanut growers into the next generation of agriculture by encouraging a cleaner, greener method of planting while ensuring an affordable and accessible supply to the markets that rely on U.S.-grown peanuts.

I'm also pleased that Congress has seen fit to include \$100 million for Pigford Claims. This funding will begin to make up for USDA's historical inability to govern our Nation's agriculture programs in a fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory manner.

Many in this legislative body believe this bill is not perfect; truth be told, I am among them. I have concerns about this legislation's ability to completely serve our family farmers in the face of skyrocketing fertilizer and diesel costs, an unstable commodities market that could

see prices plummet just as easily as it saw prices skyrocket, and increasingly unpredictable weather patterns that decimate entire crops in mere seconds.

Despite those worries, I am even more concerned by those who view this bill as not having reformed our commodity programs enough.

No, not every single reform requested by President Bush has been met. No, we haven't reduced the AGI to \$200,000, or completely rearranged the accounting in this bill to deal with the changing baselines and budgetary gimmicking touted by the White House.

But, there has been meaningful compromise on behalf of the lawmakers to whom this legislation is most important. This legislation meets the White House demands by more than half way; this legislation represents billions of dollars to not just rural America, but to people living in every corner of this country.

And, if we can spend billions of dollars fighting a war and rebuilding another country, including supporting that country's land use and agriculture programs, I think we ought to be able to find it within our means here in Congress to support American agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, we must pass this conference report today, and we must do it by a sizable margin to send a message to the President that we will not be bullied by his negotiating tactics.

Today, I say to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle "Let us not let the 'perfect' be the enemy of the 'good'." Let us pass this conference report today for our farmers and the others across this great Nation who rely on a safe and domestically grown food source.

STATEMENT FOR INTRODUCTION NASA AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the "NASA Authorization Act of 2008", a bill to reauthorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for fiscal year 2009. I am pleased that Science and Technology Committee Chairman BART GORDON, Ranking Minority Member RALPH HALL, and Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee Ranking Minority Member TOM FEENEY are joining me as original cosponsors. Their cosponsorship demonstrates the bipartisan nature of the support for NASA in this Congress, and I want to thank them for their efforts in helping to develop this legislation.

In addition to providing funding and programmatic direction for fiscal year 2009, this bill is also intended to provide congressional guidance for the next Administration relative to NASA. I believe that it is critically important for Congress to do so. Without a clear statement of congressional priorities and policies for the Nation's civil space and aeronautics enterprise, we run the risk of wasting both time and scarce resources during and after the transition from one Administration to the next. I want to avoid such an outcome if at all possible.

Madam Speaker, 2008 marks the 50th anniversary of the birth of the U.S. space program

and the establishment of NASA. NASA has accomplished a great deal in both space and aeronautical R&D over those past five decades, and we can all take pride in what has been accomplished. However, we cannot become complacent. If we fail to invest adequately in NASA now, it is unlikely that we will see a comparable record of accomplishment over the next five decades—at a great opportunity cost to the Nation.

That is because NASA's programs are strongly relevant to addressing the Nation's needs. In short, a properly balanced and focused NASA portfolio can pay large dividends to our society as well as to our standing in the world, and maximizing the value of the NASA portfolio to the Nation is one of the main goals of the NASA Authorization Act of 2008.

Thus, the bill emphasizes a number of important areas—areas that demonstrate the role that NASA can and should play in improving the quality of life of our citizens, enhancing our economic vitality, demonstrating American leadership in the international arena through the pursuit of challenging scientific and technological goals, and helping to advance knowledge.

To that end, the NASA Authorization Act of 2008 establishes a role for NASA in leading a cooperative international effort on Earth observations research and applications, especially with respect to climate change—one of the major challenges facing our generation. It builds on the recommendations of the National Academies' Earth sciences and applications decadal survey to outline a robust and challenging agenda for NASA to pursue that will help us better understand the causes and impacts of climate change as well as other Earth system phenomena. It is an agenda that will also maximize the opportunities for transitioning those research results into applications that can benefit our society in a myriad of ways.

NASA's aeronautics research program is one of the most relevant activities that NASA undertakes as it impacts both public safety and our national economy, and the bill provides guidance to ensure that that aeronautics program will regain its former health and focus so that it can continue to contribute to the wellbeing of the nation. That guidance takes several forms. For example, the legislation provides enhanced funding for aeronautics, but it makes clear that the additional funding is to be used to take NASA's aeronautics research activities to a sufficiently mature state so that the results of that research can be transitioned to the commercial sector as well as to key public sector users. One of the most important examples of the latter is the interagency initiative to develop the next generation air transportation system for the nation, known as NextGen—a program that will improve both the safety and efficiency of our air travel system. The bill makes it clear that we need to do all we can to ensure that the aircraft of the future leave as small an impact on the environment as possible, whether it be noise, energy consumption, or harmful emissions—and that NASA has a critical role to play in that effort. And the bill requires an external review of NASA's aviation safety research to make sure that it is doing all that it can to protect the flying public.

Finally, the NASA Authorization Act of 2008 recognizes that America's human space flight activities are not, and should not, be an end

in themselves. We need a results-oriented human space flight program that serves the nation's geopolitical goals in addition to advancing America's exploration of outer space. I believe that we provide the foundation for such a results-oriented approach in the bill I am introducing today. Thus, the bill includes provisions to ensure that the International Space Station—a unique orbiting R&D facility that represents a significant investment of resources by both American citizens and those of a host of other nations—will be utilized in as productive manner as possible.

In addition, the ISS is a compelling example of the value of undertaking a cooperative approach to space exploration that we would do well to emulate as we embark on exploration beyond low Earth orbit. To that end, the NASA Authorization Act of 2008 makes clear that any human exploration initiative to return to the Moon and venture to other destinations in the solar system should be undertaken as a cooperative international undertaking under U.S. leadership—and that such a cooperative approach will have the best chance of being successfully sustained if the President is personally involved in inviting our friends and allies to participate in such a venture.

It is clear that the 21st century will see the emergence and growth of ambitious human space flight programs carried out by a number of nations. It is not in our national interest to get drawn into rerunning a "space race" that we already won almost 40 years ago. Instead, we should be looking to leverage that emerging global interest to promote a peaceful, cooperative approach to space exploration under American leadership. Such an approach can provide a compelling "soft power" rationale for NASA's human exploration program and be an approach that will deliver clear benefits to America beyond just the demonstration of our technological prowess and national commitment to space exploration.

Madam Speaker, those are just three ways in which continued investment in and support for a properly focused NASA can deliver important benefits to the nation, especially if NASA works hand in hand with our colleges and universities and our commercial sector. However, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the important way in which NASA's basic and applied research activities help advance America's competitiveness and promote innovation as well as helping inspire and educate the nation's next generation of scientists, technologists, engineers, and mathematicians. That is why I and many of my colleagues consider NASA to be just as much a part of America's innovation agenda as the other agencies called out for support in the "America COMPETES Act" that was enacted into law last year. This bill recognizes that reality and puts NASA on the same doubling path as those agencies.

However, NASA will not be able to contribute effectively in the ways I have just outlined unless we not only invest adequately in NASA's programs but, equally importantly, direct those investments in ways that maximize their utility. Thus the bill contains a number of provisions focused on each of NASA's main mission areas to ensure that NASA can make the best use of its capabilities to advance the nation's space and aeronautics agenda.

Madam Speaker, I am a passionate believer in the value of America's space and aeronautics programs and the role that NASA can